ESSAYS ON MAYURBHANJ CHHAU





Banchhanidhi D

ESSAYS ON MAYURBHANJ CHHAU

BANCHHANIDHI DAS

Alakananda Publishers
Bhubaneswar, Orissa.

ESSAYS ON MAYURBHANJ CHHAU

Author :

Banchhanidhi Das

Publisher :

Alakananda Publishers,
Bhubaneswar.

Printer :

Khandagiri Press,
Plot No. 41, Unit - 6, Bhubaneswar - 1

Cover :

Siva Panigrahi

First Edition :

August 1994

Price :

Rs. 60/- (Paper Back)**Rs. 75/-** (Deluxe)

To

SRI K. VAIDYALINGAM

(Our esteemed Sr. Divisional Manager)

This little work is dedicated

as a token of heart felt esteem.

CONTENTS



CHHAU AS A FOLK DANCE

The chief component of music is dance. According to Bharat Muni "Gitam vadyam tatha nrityam eyam sangitamuchyate" that means the music is constituted of dance, song and instrumental rhythms.

We can divide Indian dances into two styles (i) Folk dance (ii) Classical dance. Since folk dance is the oldest style, natural and immortal, thus it may be treated as "Adi Nrityam" (i e. first ever dance). Every dance style is explored from the habitual body movement of the man. If we act certain things repeatedly and move our body during the action, the action generates a rhythm in our motor organs. Habit of moving one's body in an uniform repeatitive style is known as rhythmic movement. If one mingles his emotion with the rhythmic act, then a dance is being caused. The decent movement of body in a rhythmic way to dipict one's emotion is termed as dance.

We can have more natural and accurate dance style from very premitive tribes. Some parts of a folk dance possess resemblance with the body movement of adivasis (the premitive community of India) while satiating their sex hunger or vindicating their anger by waging war-fare with others. This form is popularly known as folk dance. It has its origin directly from people.

In course of evolution, people have added sophistications into these natural dances. They also synthesised and disciplined some body movements. The dances also

were rectified and modified at the need of the hour. Artistic appeals were infused in them. The dances were codified in terms of music and meaningful sensational touches. They were testified by asthetical metres and at last evolved into "classical dance" Bharat Muni, a great Aryan monk of ancient era first of all codified the folk dances and narrated these code of conducts in his memorable treatise "Natya Shastram".

Every folk dance regards "Nature" as its original source. The body construction of man of different lands, the physical geography, natural phenomenon have their similarity, so also there is similarity in their dances. This is because of the Nature which is the prime source of everything. The premitive man had collected his urge to sing and dance from the sounds of the dancing stream, the murmuring notes of the wild forest, the thrilling rumblings of the thunder, the sound of a raising storm and collected his spirit to dance from the dancing peacock, leaping of the does and falling of the water fails (2).

Any sort of art form was collected from the environment. The structure of Roman scripts were collected from the structural analysis of tree branches, the size of different leaves and flowers. Some scientists have opined that the Roman alphabet "A" has come from the structural imitation of a cow's head. Thus the folk dances of Egypt, Scandinavia, Saxena, Galics and Greece were being collected from the structural imitation of different facets of the great "Nature" (3).

Folk dance is generally traditional and sponteneity is its main element. Its style and movement does not preech of any school of thought. It finds its perfection in

dipicting natural ideas, happiness, sorrow in a person through certain rhythmic body movement. It reflects a collective mentality of a society having congruity of its own thought process, values etc. Individual is being treated in it as insignificant and the society gets prime importance. In course of its growth it has come under the influence of regional habits, religious practices and now a days is being seen as a hotch potch. But the collective spirit remains unaltered. In course of its growth myths and legends have inter woven in its fibre but till to-day these folk dances are being regulated by the appeals of different seasons of the year (4).

In rural Mayurbhanj Chhau is a popular folk dance. In the middle of 19th century it has left its folk background and accepted princely patronage of Sareikala and Mayurbhanj States. Hence we find it difficult to derive the primary get up of the dance from its present status. Yet we would study the folk dance now living among people and trace out the elements those might have influenced in shaping of the dance "Chhau".

In rural Mayurbhanj we see a popular dance "Amu Dalia" and "Jamun Dalia" We also see people workship the branches of the tree named "Kumbha Brukshya" on the 11th day of the month Bhadrab i.e. August - September. It is popularly known as "Karma Puja"; this deity has similarity with Bamanabatar (The owner of Universe taking birth as a Dwarf and asking the great donor king Bali to donate three feet measure of earth). However, Karma Puja is not observed as a mass festival. Rather Karma God is being worshipped by selected families The selection of worshipper is being done by Karma Sain (Lord Karma) by

himself. If any pious man or woman sees germinated paddy in his or her bowl of cooked rice, he feels proud of being blessed by Lord Karma. Here he or she thinks it to be a symbolic opportunity given by Lord Karma to him or her to worship Him. To trace out germinated paddy in one's non-functioning hearth or in one's culdron of boiled paddy are also considered as blessings of Lord Karma. Only those pious persons are entitled to celebrate worship of the Lord Karma. The family in a ceremonious procession accords a hearty welcome to the branches of Kumbha tree to its home. The family-members and the invited guests and neighbours use to sing Karma Songs which are popularly known as Jhumar and devotees also dance to please the God. Karma Puja is generally celebrated in the homes of Mohanta community. In the district of Boudh and Phulbani a tribe named "Ghasi" worship "Dwarf Lord Karma" on the 11th Balck moon day of the month. They also sing devotional songs in prayer of Lord Karma We may extract a portion of Karma Song here—

"Nilabati Padmabati Padma Sulakshyani
Chandrabati Harabati Subarna Ramani
Go Karma Sati

Tote Seba Kale Dukhu Tari
Bhasi gali samundrare Rakha Narahari
Go Karma Sati

Tote seba kale Dukhu Tari (1)

E Sata bhauni ambhe galu snanakari
Bhasi galu Samundrare rakha Narahari
Go Karma Sati ... (2)

Mahi Chandra Raja asi shikaraku tahin
Daka shuni chhidileka naba dhari sahi
Go Karma sati ... (3)

Purbe itihase Mago shuni achhi jaha
Bujhai kahuchhi muhin dui goti taha
Go Karma Sati (4)

× × ×

Sata Sara Sata dipa milai ekatra
Mansika Kala Raja Janma heu putra
Go Ma karma sati (8)

Deina Sarba jubati hula huli mana
Gamile Mahi Chandra Rajanka Bhavana
Go Ma Karma Sati (9)

× × ×

Enu nara nari mane tote seba kari
Putra Dukhu semane hoileti pari
Go Ma Karma Sati (12)

× × ×

Ekadashi ardha rate ani "Mundi dala"
Nutan bastar kini dhankiba ta mula
Go Ma Karma Sati... (15)

(5)

(The gist of above folk poem goes as follows)

"Once Seven beautiful women went out for a joy-bath in the bay where they faced serious danger of being drowned. They shouted for help. A king named Mahichandra came to forest for hunting who heard the cries. The women in their last moment, were praying Lord Karma. King Mahichandra rescued them with a country-made boat. All prayed for the mercy of Lord Karma and they promised there to celebrate the puja in their homes. Any person goes without a son to save his clan, worships Karma and begets the male-child".

Worshipping nature in a tree form is there very much in western Orissa. People worship the Goddess Laxmi and Bana Devi on all four thursday of Margashir i. e later part of November and early part of December in Sambalapur and Bolangir. The devotees use to hold one procession for bringing "Ghata" i e. one earthen pitcher full of holy water being filled in any nearby stream or pool to the pandal. At the head of the procession dancers being decorating their body with the branches of "Anla" tree use to perform a dance popularly known as "Dalkhai" (6) This folkdance has similarity with Mayurbhanj dance "Amudalia - Jamun dalia". The dances in ancient time used the branches of mango and jamun tree as decoration to their bodies and dance to welcome the "Jatra Ghata" of the king. According to chhau dance teacher Krushna Chandra Nayak the dance has got a folk appeal and origin. It was considered as a village dance. It was a premitive edition of Chhau. The dancers of Amu dalia - Jamun dalia use to come from distant villages to take part in celebration and they think to please the king by dancing This way Chhau dance came into being (7).

The chief element of any folk dance is "Bira Rasa" the jubilant sound of a warrior. "Pharikhanda" one typical warrior dance represents the "Bira Rasa" Bhuyans and Gandas are the premitive community of "Bhanj Baoomi". In 16th century this region was called as "Jhar Khand Patisa" as enumerated in Madala Panji, a calander which is being written regularly from time immorable in Jagannath Temple at Puri. The Gajapati king had conquored this region at the time of emperor Akbar. In 1952 AD Raja Mansingh of Akbar's court had signed an agreement with eleven regional kings. We see the name of Jharkhand

Patisa comes in that list. The Gajapati soldiers who were posted as boarder guards to this region were known among the subjects as "Dharua". Since there is a typical body movement in chhau which is known as "Dharan", I think the said word has been originated from the synonymous word of the warrior "Dharua". In Khurda District we also see there is provision to participate in a collective exercise learning class in each village known as "Paika Akhara". Thus it would be safe to conclude that the spirit of heroism in chhau has been collected from the warrior dance of Khurda Paikas which later on took the shape of Pharikhanda dance. Pharikhanda dance is the premitive edition of Chhau in Mayurbhanj.

In content Changu dance comes very nearer to chhau. Even now-a-days this dance is being practised in rural Mayurbhanj in Bathudi community. In Autumn they use to dance at the humming tune of changu baja, a round shaped Dafli. They also hold a collective dinner known as "janthal" from the donated rice collected from different household of the village. The main deity of the dance are Shiva and Parbati whom Chhau dancers also worship. Changu is also a group dance. The dancers use sounding round shaped belts around the lower part of their legs and dance with the tune of folk songs.

Jhumar a folk song has immense bearing over Chhau. The singers of Mahanta community use to sing Jhumar in Karma Puja, Jhumar is also being sung in other community festivals. The songs are very enchanting and romantic in nature. Chhau dance generally ends in a vigorous movement which is known as "Natki". The Jhumar lyrics have provided spirit to these "Natkis". When Jhumar came to

be used in the Durbar entertainment, it shaded away its folk spirit and classical touch was given. The durbari dance experts infused lyrics of Jhumar in Chhau. Moreover, the disciples of Chaitanya got lively scope to inject the message of Vaisnavism in Jhumar in 16th. and 17th. century. They modified the theme according to their need. The theme dipicted love of Radha and Krushna, their union and separation in a tone of romance. Later on Jhumar became the main vehicle in which Radha-Krushna theme came into Chhau (8).

The Tusu songs have also contr buted its spirit to Chhau dance. The appeal of the song takes back our memory to the olden days, while this region was facing foreign invasion frequently. We may refer to the invasion of Firoz Toghlogue to Jajnagar (the modern Jajpur) in 1361 and on his way he had invaded Khiching. (9) During the bloody attack, there were plunders and rapes. As People's saying goes, in Rairangpur a village woman named Tusu could not tolerate the insult on her chastity and she plunged into the river to escape from the humiliation. Her self-sacrifice later on became a symbol of preservation of chastity and this took the shape of a festival. On the last day of famous "Maker Parba" Tusu is being observed. The women folk use to take the image of Tusu in a procession singhing Tusu songs to the nearby river to dip it in water. In Mayurbhanj Chhau we hear certain romantic songs are being sung. The note of separation of these songs procured its spirit from these melancholic tone of Tusu songs.

Folk elements in Chhau.

In Chhau we observe "Bhangi" or postures are being created through the blend of two types of body-movement

namely "Tobka and Ufli". These "bhangis" have been devided into "Kali Bhanga" and "Kali Kata". We see the elements of folk dance, folk behaviour and daily life in these "Bhangis".

The meaning of "Tobka" is to walk one's legs lifting high. In "Lahara Tobka", we see waves of water and its movement dipicted in posture. In "Sada Tobka" the natural body movement of a normal man is shown. By twisting and carving waist, the dancer creates "Moda Tobka". "Duba Tobka" creates posture of body movement done under water. In "Uska Tobka" flying of a butterfly is dipicted. Briefly speaking the way of life of common men has enriched the "tobka" posture of Chhau.

Like wise, the ufli postures have direct link with folk doings and livings. In certain actions we mark similarity with the postures created by common man in discharging his daily routined work. I narrate below certain examples—

Action similar to folk way of life.

1) Collection of cow-dung—The action dipicting a person collecting the cow dung by bending his body downward.
2) Mixing up the cow-dung—Action of mixing up of the cow dung with a little water to prepare cakes for burning.
3) Action similar to clean the floor of the house with a broom-stick.
4) Action similar to clean the dishes with water.
5) Action having oneness with that of preparing paste of termeric on a country made grinding stone.

be used in the Durbar entertainment, it shaded away its folk spirit and classical touch was given. The durbari dance experts infused lyrics of Jhumar in Chhau. Moreover, the disciples of Chaitanya got lively scope to inject the message of Vaisnavism in Jhumar in 16th. and 17th. century. They modified the theme according to their need. The theme dipicted love of Radha and Krushna, their union and separation in a tone of romance. Later on Jhumar became the main vehicle in which Radha-Krushna theme came into Chhau (8).

The Tusu songs have also contr buted its spirit to Chhau dance. The appeal of the song takes back our memory to the olden days, while this region was facing foreign invasion frequently. We may refer to the invasion of Firoz Toghlogue to Jajnagar (the modern Jajpur) in 1361 and on his way he had invaded Khiching. (9) During the bloody attack, there were plunders and rapes. As People's saying goes, in Rairangpur a village woman named Tusu could not tolerate the insult on her chastity and she plunged into the river to escape from the humiliation. Her self-sacrifice later on became a symbol of preservation of chastity and this took the shape of a festival. On the last day of famous "Maker Parba" Tusu is being observed. The women folk use to take the image of Tusu in a procession singhing Tusu songs to the nearby river to dip it in water. In Mayurbhanj Chhau we hear certain romantic songs are being sung. The note of separation of these songs procured its spirit from these melancholic tone of Tusu songs.

Folk elements in Chhau.

In Chhau we observe "Bhangi" or postures are being created through the blend of two types of body-movement

namely "Tobka and Ufli". These "bhangis" have been devided into "Kali Bhanga" and "Kali Kata". We see the elements of folk dance, folk behaviour and daily life in these "Bhangis".

The meaning of "Tobka" is to walk one's legs lifting high. In "Lahara Tobka", we see waves of water and its movement dipicted in posture. In "Sada Tobka" the natural body movement of a normal man is shown. By twisting and carving waist, the dancer creates "Moda Tobka". "Duba Tobka" creates posture of body movement done under water. In "Uska Tobka" flying of a butterfly is dipicted. Briefly speaking the way of life of common men has enriched the "tobka" posture of Chhau.

Like wise, the ufli postures have direct link with folk doings and livings. In certain actions we mark similarity with the postures created by common man in discharging his daily routined work. I narrate below certain examples—

Action similar to folk way of life.

1) Collection of cow-dung—The action dipicting a person collecting the cow dung by bending his body downward.
2) Mixing up the cow-dung—Action of mixing up of the cow dung with a little water to prepare cakes for burning.
3) Action similar to clean the floor of the house with a broom-stick.
4) Action similar to clean the dishes with water.
5) Action having oneness with that of preparing paste of termeric on a country made grinding stone.

6) Action dipicting grinding of paddy in a wooden country-made haller machine.
7) Action similar to whisk away the whisks from the corn.
8) Action similar to taking bath.
9) Action similar to thrush the washed hairs with a piece of cloth.
10) Action resembling to wear a point of vermillon on the forehead by married woman.
11) Action similar to dividing a bamboo vertically into two parts.

Action similar to the movement of species.

1) The Pose of a deer while leaping.
2) The pose of a "sheul" fish while taking a leap.
3) Action similar with a walking crane which walks by lifting the legs very slowly.
4) Action similar to searching fish minutely underneath the water by a crane.
5) The pose similar to that of a monkey drinking water.
6) The action akin to the stylistic leap of a prawn fish.
7) The action similar to the jumping goat.
8) The action similar to a crane taking water.

Durbari chhau has liquidated many elements of its folk origin but the remaints which are still there are very much significant to gauge its folk origin.

In post independence era it is suggested that Chhau should serve the interest of Durbar of people by infusing more folk elements into its fabrics.

References.

1) Adhikari Subhadra— Bharatiya Nrityakala Page 13
2) Mishra Manmohan— Loka Nrutya, Aviyatri, Balasore, Aug. - Octo. '92, page 52.
3) Ibid.
4) Karan Dr. Sudhir Kumar— Bangali Samaj O- Loka Nritya-Desh- page 53. Shravan 1384.
5) Shaw Biswanath— Folk dance & Music of Orissa, page 24, Publisher— Kala Vikash Kendra, Orissa-1961.
6) Ibid.
7) Writer's Conversation with Guru at his Babu Sahi residence at Baripada, Mayurbhanj in Nov. 1980.
8) Mohanta Sitakanta—Essay— Jhumur, an enchanting people's song - Rastradoot - Spl. No Page 1, 15.8.1979 part 8 issue No. 91 Balasore, Orissa.



RANGA VADYA : THE PRELUDE TO CHHAU DANCE

Just a mukhasala (introductory portion) is to a temple, the Ranga vadya (introductory orchestra) is to the chhau dance The people who constitute the group orchestra are drummers, sahanai players, the flute players etc. They extend their sharing hand to the dancers in creating "rasa". In folk dance, the orchestra team was very much in front line of activities but royal patronage pushed them into the background and their role practically became secondary The king was being welcomed to audiance on the eve of the show through this vadya during its Duibar days. It was popularly known as "Judan" (i.e. beginning) among the common viewers.

Why Ranga Vadya ?

Ranga Vadya basically creates an orientation in the minds of the audiance. It motivates them. It also brings a thrill in body, mind and soul of the viewers and creates an atmosphere of absorbing the art.

Ranga Vadya creates "Rasa" and it also distributes six types of "Rasas". Before chaitanya's visit, the heroic spirit was summum bonum of Chhau But he instilled "Lasya Rasa" (i e. tenderness) in both its content and form. Thus "Lasya" and "Vira Rasa" were inter woven in the Chhau. The Ranga Vadya which we hear now-a-days is dominated by lasya type rhythms and flow. It is very pleasant and lucid to hear.

Social Status of Ranga Vadyakars.

The artists participating in Ranga Vadya are members of down trödden communities of Northern Orissa. They come under the category of scheduled caste. They belong to Hadi, Bauri, Dama community. As we observe from our sociological experience the owner of the land, temple and inns use to occupy the highest place in the social ladder. This is because economic affluency is the determining factor of one's social position. There was a time, when followers of Buddhism had their hay day because of its royal patronage. The Brahmins, kshetriyas of Hindu community were not in front line, though a large chunk of land and capital was in their control. ·Buddha and his disciples constituted Sangha's (associations) and Sangha tried its best for the upliftment of the down troddens. In Orissa, Hadis, Bauris, Dumas and Kurungas accepted Buddhism as their cult and achieved Royal patronage. During the days of Buddhism, they formed the upper strata of the society and determined the destiny of the time (1) Haddipa, as dipicted great Guru in "Tika Govinda Chandra" was the moral teacher of the society who also belonged to the Hadi community and follower of Oriya Mahayan cult. Pandit Rahul Sankrityayan has pointed out that there were twenty-six Mahayan preachers in western and Northern Orissa and Luippa, Haddipa, Kumarpa, Dombapa and Bhusukupa were prominent amonth them. Though the members of these schedule caste community had their occupation of the upper crust of ·the society, they never tried to accumulate land, capital etc. which are the basic factors to stabilise one's social-position. 'At the erosion of Buddhism and its status of "Raja-Dharma" these communities found themselves in the lowest step of the

society again. Their downfall was due to the Great Shankar's vigorous debate with the Buddhist monks which gave rise to the Vedanta school of philosophy and the Adaityavad, It was in 10 th. century. But the folk songs of songs of Nath cult which generated folk poems like "Boudha Gaan" and "Duha" in Apavramsa literature, remained as the witness of the history. Therein the ladies of Duma, Hadi communities were dipicted as the heroines. Being dethroned by Shankar's campaign from the upper crust, these communities grovelled in the dust again. They had accumulated no landed property. Thus economic crisis became acute. They came to street with their art, music and used to perform artistic show. Thus artistic performance i.e. Playing drum and flute in Public turned into their way of life. But they never shed their social ego that they earned in the days of their Royal Patronage. Even to-day they would not take prepared rice from any Hindu home which Points out, their inherited social ego. In Northern Orissa, you would see this social behaviour among the members these downtroden communities.

In 1510 A. D. the great Sri Chaitanya had his long march through the state of Mayurbhanj on his way to Puri (2), He took to this route as there were Mughal disturbances in the costal districts of Orissa. In course of his journey, he had to advocate gospel of love, Peace and co-existence among different warring communities of Indian Society. These were the days of Bhakti Movement. Chaitanya set his camp in the then capital of Mayurbhanj, Haripur. Another group of Chaitanya's devotees led by Shyamananda Goswami had to move via Gopiballavpur Via-Amarda village via Bhadrak and joined their course with that of Chaitanya at Jajpur, Chaitanya was also an

excellent dancer who came across Chhau. He had to his credit uplifting and re-esta-blishing Manipuri dance during his "padayatra" in north-eastern region. His was also mission of uplifting the down-troddens of both Hindu and Muslim society. He has been correctly pointed out as God-incarnate for salvation of the have-nots (Patit Taran janye Taba Abatar) by one of the prominent Gaudiya Kirtan composer, Norottam Das. The artistic instruments of Hadis, Kurungas and their dance drama Chhau became the means Chaitanya infused certain dance items based on "Krishna Charita" in chhau. These dancers were turned into his flag bearers for a time being. Gaudiya Vaisnabism faced crisis due to serious debate between Oriya and Bengali cult. This took place after the death of Chaitanya, of course. They were debating whether swakiya (i e. having love with one's legal life partner) is better than Parakiya (i. e. having love relation with other's wife). The Oriya Vaisnabas were too conservative to go to other's wives. This debate hindered the great programmes taken up by Sri Chaitanya. The Brahmins again caught the rein of the economic life of the society. They had to wed to the principle of .co-existence with the "pathanas" in order to defeat the dominance of Vaisnabism. A popular proverb goes in Orissa that "Brahman and Pathans are twin brothers" (Brahman Pathan Dui Bhai) which is the proof of this opportunistic co-existence (3).

The Bhanja Royal dynasty used to arrange certain scholarship on yearly basis to their artists during late 19th century. Thus the players had to stage "Ranga Vadya" for paying their salutation to the benevolent king of the soil.

Mayurbhanj's merger with Indian dominion was delayed due to certain political reasons. The administration of the state was on the verge of collapse during the days of merger. These reasons also hindered the state for patronising to Chhau and its artists. The Indian Government did not pay proper attention to the community in the initial years of independence. But the artists used to go to the street with their musical instruments for earning their daily bread. We hear the Natki rhythms being played by them in the bridal processions in that region which is nothing but engaging the properties of Chhau to the Service of the social life.

Purva Ranga and Ranga Vadya.

The chief elements of Kaishika Vriti are dance and music. Prior to Bharat Muni, in other words before 2nd. Century A.D. there was a dance style named "Upa Rupak" which was nothing but a folk dance style which was also a proponen of Kaishika Vriti (4) The demons opposed Bharat who dipicted them as villian in his drama Thus Bharat used to stage a prelude to his drama known as "Purva Raga". Here he used only dance and music to set the show. But this arrangement was so .made which should not bring fatigue among the audiance, what Bharat opined (5)

That is also role of Ranga Vadya. It gives an artistic start and co-ordinates the different dance items by intervening in between their recess. There was ample proof that the Vaisnabas adopted the "Ranga Vadya" in

their dance drama during 16th century. Practically that was the time when the Ranga Vádya w s prefixed to Chhau dance in Mayurbhanj.

Concluding Remarks :

All the world's a stage-remarks Shakespear and music of universe is never dead The "Ranga Vadya" brings the music of the deep forest, the choreography of the rivers and notes of the great Nature as a whole to the stage (6) Here comes the relevance of lines of Poet Yeats—

"Come away
come away
To the woods and waters wild
To the misty fairy land
The world is so full of sorrow
That you can understand"

But in the middle age, the Ranga Vadya of Chhau could not remain faithful to the common man, it lost its roots by accepting royal patronage This is a negation in the course of its evolu ion which must be negated again to reach the right path of development. In 1981 the "Little Ballet Troupe of Gwalior" staged in form of a ballet the "Discovery of India" but in the same stage Chhau troupe staged a dance drama based on Puranic contents What I intend to hint at that Chhau should take up modern story or plots and dipict it in its dance items. This would negate the feudal fervour of Chhau and lead it on a scientific path of development.

Any stagnation breeds suffocation and the situation leaps into a deteriorating course. The rhythms of modern

cenema songs find their inroads into the water tight compartment of Chhau. These should be replaced by the tunes of some Patriotic songs or modern folk lores. It is high time on the part of Chhau teachers to thinK innovatively to infuse the above two rhythms in the Ranga Vadya which can only save the item from ruins.

References.

1. Dr. Bhattacharya Ashutosh—Chhau dance of Purulia, Page 16, 1st Edn. July' 79 Calcutta.
2. Prof Sarangi Deepak— Special Number Published on Maharaja Sri Ram Chandra Deo,s 108th birth Anniver sary—Publisher—Maharaja Sri Ramachandra Bhanj Deo Library Baripada, Oriss Pg. 49.
3. A Pvoverb of North Orissa.
4. Ranga Charya Adya—The Indian Theatres Page—9, Publisher—N. B. T, New Delhi 1980.
5. Ibid—Page 75
6. Mishra Manmohan—Orissara Loka Sanskruti, Aviyatri-Balasore—Aug. Octo.'92 Page—56.



VAISNABISM AND CHHAU

Both Shaivism and Vaisnavism have contributed much for the evolution of Chhau dance. Vaisnabism especially in North Orissa has provided fresh materials to enrich this folk art. It introduced many new dance items, influenced the dancers to adopt to means of mass-communication, accept common language and folk rhythm.

Explaining the origin of Gaudiya cult of Vaisnabism Pandit Nila kantha Das emphasised that the source of Visnabism is Buddhism. The perverted form of Buddhism is Bajrayan. In course of time, the Bajrayan was converted into Bengali tantrik way of living. Bengali tantrik schools took to sexual means to attend "Nirvan" or salvation. After a long spell of time, this perversion were rectified by Sri Chaitanya (1479-1530) by founding Gaudiya cult, propogating only love bereft of any motive and desire is the means to attend Perfection in one's life (1)

The civilisation which finds its menifestation in Northern Orissa is the by-product of a mixture and interaction between Asura civilization (brought out. to India from Africa and western Asia) and Aryan Civilisation (which has also come beyond Asian Minors, from the sores of caspians) Buddhism has tried to rectify the Hinduism by negating "Yagyan" and violence .in performing sacrifices before God (2) A But after the passing of Buddha it continued to ruin itself. After a long passage of time, Buddhists of Bengal branch adopted a life having sexual facilities which they propounded to be the only means to attend "nirvan". It is the origin time of Bajrayan. But

Oriya school of Bajrayan wedded to "Sunya Sadhana" i e. to meditate to achieve nothingness in one's self. They propogated in favour of self-restraint and they were popularly known as "Sunyavadin", the presence of which we mark in the spirit of the poems written by "Five Friends" or "Panchasakha" i.e. Jagannath Das, Shishu Ananta, Balabanta, Yasobanta and .Achyutananda.

The "Shunyavad" gave rise to Jagannath Tantrism when the "mantra" (spiritual words or sentences having dynamic power in it) chanted before the God Jagannath we see they adopt certain tantric lines and rites. Even the king constructed Vimala temple in the Jagannath temple complex and sacrifice of animals were done there. But these days were being curtailed at the arrival of Jain cult brought over by the invading warriors of Karnatak to Orissa. The Jagannath tantrism had to modify itself to match with the situation.

By that time the Bengal branch of Bajrayan had been degenerated and Chaitanya had got it rectified with his own Bhakti philosophy. Thus at the leadership of Chaitanya there was a great merger of Bengal branch of Bajrayan, Oriya branch of Bajrayan having influence of Jainism and the great Jagannath Cult. In order to acertain supremacy of his cult Chaitanya had to stay in Orissa for long time.

Way of life led by Utkaliya Vaisnabs.

No doubt we still possess certain social behaviour pattern what we call them remaints of the Asura Savyata (Asuric culture) which in course of time has regulated the way of life of Hindu culture.

(1) In Mahabharat as we find no mention of seven days of a week. It has got its Asuric origin.

(2) The Rashis (Stars), the name of the months are also brought from the Kaldians and Greeks. R. P. Brown (jr.) in his book "Primitive constellation" has claimed that this regulated the sense of timing among Hindus since 4th. or 5th. century B. C.

(3) In our Social life we see the elder brother remains away from his younger brother's wife. This practice is very much popular in Northern Orissa. Touching One's younger brother's wife (by the elder brother) is considered as sin.

But if we look into the Practices narrated in Mahabharat we see that there was no such dealings. There we come across a word "Devar" means the brother of a lady's husband with whom her relation was very sweet. The staying away practice from one's younger brother's wife is prevalent in Santal and Munda community.

(4) The village street opera "Kela Keluni" is the ancient form of drama style of Austrics

(5) In ancient Aryan community there was convention to have intercourse with one's wife as soon as she menstruates The Vedic prescription is - "Ritou Jaya Mupeyat". In the long absence of Rishis or Guru if his wife menstruates, she invites the handsome students present in Ashram for conjugation as we come across events from Purans. But Asuric civilisation regulated it by denying sex during that period. This practice is now considered a hall-mark in Oriya homes though it has its Asuric origin. The "Ekatrish Patal" by Achyutananda prescribes in Asuric light.—

"Rajabati nariki je ramai
Kita tanure se janama lavai.,'

(6) Chhau and its companion i e. "Chaitra parva" has also procured another Asuric ritual into its practice. The "bhaktas,' (devotees) of lord Shiva walk on the culdrons of fire, move their bodies on bed of thorns. These are of Asuric origin. We see these practices were there in the ancient African community, and in certain Pecific islands.

(7) In northern Orissa people believe that if they point out to a new borne fruit of a plant by their fingers, the fruit would fall fade and perish. One should not sit on the door step because it would cause poverty. One should not urinate on fire, his organ would develope disease. If the country eagle or vulture would sit on one's house-top, a death would occur in that family These beliefs have their Asuric Origin. (2) B

The Utkaliya Vaisnabs practise "nothingness" and the Gaudiya Vaisnabs practise "bodism" to achieve "nirvan". The Gaudiya vaisnabs propagated in favour of "parakiya priti" (love with other man's wife) and the utkaliya Vaisnabs being influenced by the Asuric restraint in sexual affirs accepted "swakiya priti" (love with own spouse). That is why in entire Oriya Bhagabat Jagannath Dash has not uttered the name of Radha even once. (3) though Radha-cult was prevalent then in Northern Bihar and U P. The Gaudiyas at the leadership of Sri Chaitanya believed "prema' (love) is the only means to achieve salvation whereas the UtKal school of Vaisnabism at the leadership of Panchasakha propagated pure knowledge is the only means.

The "Parakiya Love" ruled over the time and regulated the time of Bajrayan, the tantrik period and the period of Bhakti movement in Bengal. Historian Dinesh Chandra Sen has narrated how for having a free Sex, thousands accepted Gaudiya branch of Vaisnabism. In Northern Orissa if a person faces sexual scandal, he converts himself into a Vaisnab to save his skin in the conservative society. Thus rightly goes a people's saying "there were twelve castes. A new caste namely "Gola" becomes the thirteenth. And any one loses his credibility to be within these 13 castes, then he goes to aperverted caste, that is Vaisnabism" (4)

The "Parakiya" otherwise known as "Sahajiya" (i.e. through love God can be achieved very easily) could not regulate the newly converted Vaisnabs who wanted free sex in abundance. Thus they later on were converted into Muslims in Bengal.

At last they wanted free-sex to be enacted in law. In "Banga Sahitya Parichay" Dinesh Chandra Sen has written that Newab Aliwordhi khan had called a Durbar to discuss about "Swakiya and Parakiya Love." He at last, hearing all discourses, declared Parakiya Love as better and viable alternative for a man in the society. (5)

The influence of Sahajiya trend is very much seen over Chhau. Though the Chhau students take a vow before the God Bhairaba that they would practise self restraint, but in practice they consume liquor and fried meat during those days. They also give much importance to Lasya dance which the Gaudiyas had introduced in Chhau.

How Vaishnabism came to Mayurbhanj ?

The Vaishnabism was propagated in Mayurbhanj in

two spells. While passing through Hariharpur (Puruna Baripada) Sri Chaitanya had the opportunity to advocate his faith among people. His stay was very short, thus the faith could not be taken to the remotest corner of the land During 1615-1655, Krishna Bhanj was ruling Mayurbhanj and was a devotee of Sri Chaitanya (6)

Narrating the second phase of propagation of Vaisnabism the great archaeologist Paramananda Acharya opines "Rasikananda, the disciple of Chaitanya made Maharaja Vaidyanath Bhanj of Mayurbhanj his disciple at Baripada (1610 A.D.), the then capital of Mayurbhanj and soon after the image of Krishna named "Govinda" of Gopiballavpur was married with an image of Radha as the daughter of Maharaja at the village Khadiasul situated half way between Gopiballavpur and Baripada. Maharaja of Mayurbhanj made a grant of the village as the dowery to the image of Radha (7)

If we study an epic of Vaisnaba literature "Rasika Mangal" the above point can be substantiated. Gopijana Ballav Das, a disciple of Prabhu Rasikananda Dev Goswami of Gopiballavpur in Midnapur, completed the writing of "Rasika Mangal", the biography and the teachings of Rasikananda in 1655 A. D. . The Book was written just after the death of the great Vaisnab apostle, in 1652 A.D. The following lines find mention in the prologue of "Rasika Mangal" about Maharaja Krishna Bhanj Dev whose grand father Maharaja Vaidyanath Bhanj was a disciple of Rasikananda and Shyamananda.

"Bandinu Srikrishna Deva Bhanj Maharaja
Dridha bhabe Shyamananda pade seba puja
Punya bale prabal pratapi Nripabar,
Bairiraj asi jar charan kinkar."

Thus it is clear that Maharaja Krishna Chandra Bhanj Deo (1) was ruling during mid seventeenth century and was a devoted Vaisnab.

During 18th. century Vaisnabism in Northern Orissa received another boost by Baladev Vidya Bhusan. Born in Mayurbhanj Baladev went to Karnatak to study Vedas. He was impressed by the philosophy of Gaudiyas like Rup Goswami, Sanatan and Jiv who were settled at Vrindaban and wrote extensively in Sanskrit on Vaisnabism. Baladev joined Gaudiya school and went to Vrindaban. There he wrote his great commentary "Govinda Vasya." The book established the doctrine of "Achintya Vedaved" on the pedestal comparable to that of "Shankar Vasya" of Shankaracharya, the "Shrivasya" of Ramanujacharya, the "Anu bhasya" of Madhabacharya and the "Pusti Marga Vasya" of Vallavacharya (9).

The "Govindavasya" became the "Bible" in the hands of Neo-Vaisnabs of Northern Orissa. This dawned a spritual renaissance among the elites and intellectuals of this region even after two centuries of Chaitanya's passage through Mayurbhanj.

Influence over Chhau.

The rise of Vaishnabism and cult of devotion influenced Chhau in three ways-

Firstly, it induced the kings of Mayurbhanj to build temples for Radha and Krishna. The temples of Baripada, viz-Radhamohan jew Temple, Gaurang Temple, and Matha of Gopiballavpur, Khunta, Kanhupur, Udla, Chitrada were nothing but theatre houses of Chhau where Vaishnab-scholars were modifying Chhau to the tune of "Lasya Rasa". The Kings had donated acres of landed property

to these seats of learning and appointed care-takers whose duty was to arrange shows of dance and drama. Even Royal family-members used to campose and introduce new type of choreographs in these dances. Sharat Chandra Bhanj Deo composed some poems on "Bhadari Jhoomor" and also introduced tune of jhoomor in the "Natki" (the concluding Part of Chhau dance) Profusely .

Secondly, Vaishnabism brought Chhau to the public by organising shows on the village squares in stead at the "mandapas" (pandels) of the temples and courtyard of "mathas". This brought a revolutionary change in Chhau dance. The dancers sang and danced in the street under open sky and acknowledged wide acceptance of commoners. This led to community singing and dancing. The epic "Bhagabat" provided plots for evolving new items of Chhau dance such as Tamudia Krushna, Labani Chori, Kaliya Dalan etc.

Chhau's traditional appeal stood at vigour and heroism. These were the basic elements procured by it from the premitive folk-art. Vaishnabism inducted in it tenderness, softness and reality by introducing "Lasya Rasa". This is the third contribution of Vaishnabism to Chhau.

Vaishnabism was much tolerant to other allied faiths. They believed and practised the core theory of Chaitanya, that is- "Trinadapi Samichina, Tarureba Sahishnuta". Which means-"Go down in tolerance like a blade of grass, be as passive as a tree" They tried for the upliftment of down troddens of the society and propagated Vaishnabic thought in their community. They adopted Chhau as a means to reach the people. They had taken

downtrodders as their dancers. Even to day as we see, these "dalits" are the flag bearers of this tradition enunciated by Vaishnabs.

References.

1. Das, Pandit Nilakantha-Oriya Sahityar Krama Parinam-Page 65
2. (A) Jayadev- "Gita Govind"

   (B) Das, Pandit Nilakantha_Oriya Sahityar krama Parinam_Page 67
3. Acharya Padmashri Paramananda_Studies of Orissan History, Archaeology & Archieves_Page 427.
4. Popular sayings of Northern Orissa.
5. Sen Dinesh Chandra, Banga Sahitya Parichaya-Page 107
6. Acharya Padmashri Paramananda_Studies of Orissan History, Archaeology and Archives_Page 207.
7. Ibid_Page 433.
8. Das Gopijana Ballav_Rasika Mangal Page 5 & 6.
9. Chatterjee Dr. Suniti Kumar_Arta Ballav Mohanti Memorial Lectures first series_1964_"The People, Language and culture of Orissa" Published by Sahitya Academy, Bhubaneswar Page 68_69.



CERTAIN DANCE ITEMS OF CHHAU.

The theme of any dance item of Chhau has been derived from the epics like Ramayan and Mahabharat. Certain item liKe "Sabar toka" (a youngster of Savar community) finds its folk and social origin. The famous war dance has been composed to glorify the pose and posture of a warrior while involved in warfare. The gist of some prominent dance items are enumerated below.—

1) Jambeb :

It is one of the important solo dances. In Ramayan the Deccan Prince Jambeb acted like minister and guide of the exiled prince of Oudh, Ram Chandra. The attire of Jambeb is semi-human and semi-ape like. He wears a country-made necklace, holds a bow and sword in his hands, bears a Ram Tilak on his fore head, wears a "Kundal' in his ears and above all fixes a bunch of wild flowers on his tail-top. He enters the stage in his own dance style and continues the same. In the midst of his performance he even plucks certain wild fruits from plants. This is the dance of joy originated from the village folks who used to sustain by procuring wild fruits and roots from forest and who used to live in peace.

2) Sabar Toka—It is also a dance having folk origin. It is a solo dance. The daily life of an aborgin is dipicted in it. The appeals of the item lies in simplicity. A dancer in the attire of a yougster of sabar community having javelin in one hand and sealed in the other comes dancing

to the stage. In course of his dance he dipicts postures like-searching thoroughly for a hunt and at times he becomes charmed to see the beauty of Nature and again persues his unfinished job. At length he gets a prey. On finishing his job, he feels unbearable thirst. He quenches it by taking water from a stream and returns home dancing with joy. Optimism is the driving force of the dance-item. Though an adivasi lives in a state of poverty, but he never exihibits his pessimism in him nor he rebels against the ruler. This psyche which was prevalent then in the princely state has been successfully inter woven in this dance-character.

3. Matru Puja

In this dance, a young couple from the Sabar Community worship Goddess Adyashakti in the green fields in the bounty of Nature. An arrogant king who comes for hunt, interferes in the rituals. A tussel takes place between the devotees and the stranger. At last to save the evotees from the dreadful attack, Goddess Durga comes down in human form and defeats the king. The dance glorifies the tenents of Shakta cult where they believe shakti or the Nature is the end all and be all of all existence on earth. No doubt, we see a great influence of the above cult in formulating this dance.

4. Card Dance

It is a modern dance form. The Durbari dance masters had composed it in 1934 A.D. The joker, hero of the playing cards comes to the stage from the audiance gallery He accords cordial invitation to the audiance to witness this dance. Generally the playing cards contains five cate-

gories of members like spade, Diamond, Heart, Club, Ac and Jack. From each of these types four dancers come symbolising its representation. They constitute a colourful team of twenty having Jocker as their leader. The joker conducts the dance as if he is playing the cards unto himself. The dancers move at the command of the master. Some-times the joker uses to assemble the dancers as if he assembles the cards in a permutation and combination style. This act gathers momentum and carries the emotion of the heart-throbbed onlookers The joker acts just like a refree and winds up the dance. We observe a beam of satire to be present in this creative item The card dance carries different characters of the society and reflects their socio-economic behavioural pattern in course of dance.

5. Nishitha Milan (Union at Night)

The dance starts with an introductory song such as-

"Nishi dupure Radhari duare
Shyama dakata kuhu sware
Shankita Sure".

(It is around midnight. Shrikrishna through the notes of his flute approaches Radhika to come out. The notes were as sweet as the song of the cuckoo bird. But the tone of his call was full of apprehensions)

Radhika in a romantic dance style, opens the door slowly and sees her lover approaching. They exchange their loving words through dance. They use subtle body movement and facial movement to express their desire to love.

At last, Krishna gets Radhika by his side to talk intimately. This is a "Lasya" dance style.

6) Labani Chori (Stealing the butter)

It is a group dance. Shrikrushna forms a group consisting of cowherd boys of Gopapur to steal the butter from homes of milkmen. He becomes the leader of the gang. The group enters a house and continues the stealing. The distribution of the contraband is done on the spot. A boy minds for his small share and becomes inactive in dance. Shrikrishna takes up the matter and consoles the friend by sharing from his own possession. Thus the dance ends in a happy-note.

7) Yuga Parivartan (Change of the era)

Accourding to Hindu version there are four eras since the arrival of man in this solar system such as-Satya (the first era where only truth nothing but truth was reigning supreme). Tretaya the 2nd. era when Ram Chandra and his solar dynasty were ruling over India) Dwapar (The 3rd. phase when Yudhistir and Kuru dynasty were governing) and Kali (the present time where struggle and tussel become the order of the days). In every era, to eradicate untruth and false hood God comes to earth as "Yugavatar". He leads a social and familylife like common man and set examples in the art of living. The ideal pairs are Laxmi and Narayan (in Satya) Sita and Rama (Tretaya), Radha and Krushna (Dwapara) and Shiva and Parbati (in Kali). Shiva and Parvati are in charge of the present era For any redressal of earthly grievance, one should approach them with folded hands. The above mentioned pairs come

dancing to the stage. In Natki, they use to dance together in order to signify that they are nothing but part of the great "He".

8) War Dance.

In 1910 at the active guidance of the then Maharaja of Mayurbhanj. Sri Rama Chandra Bhanj Deo this dance was coined. In 1911 George V and empress Mary visited Calcutta where this dance was presented for th ir entertainment. Thirty two warriors participated in it. At present, due to smallness of the Pandel, the number of participants was decreased to 20. The warriors carry swords and sealds etc. Their movement is regulated in such a manner that the dance in its vigorous state is continued smoothly The grammer of the dance possesses "Vira rasa". Through there is heroic spirit in it, and though mascle power is projected, but under any such act there flows a current of tenderness.



CHHAU UNDER ROYAL PATRONAGE

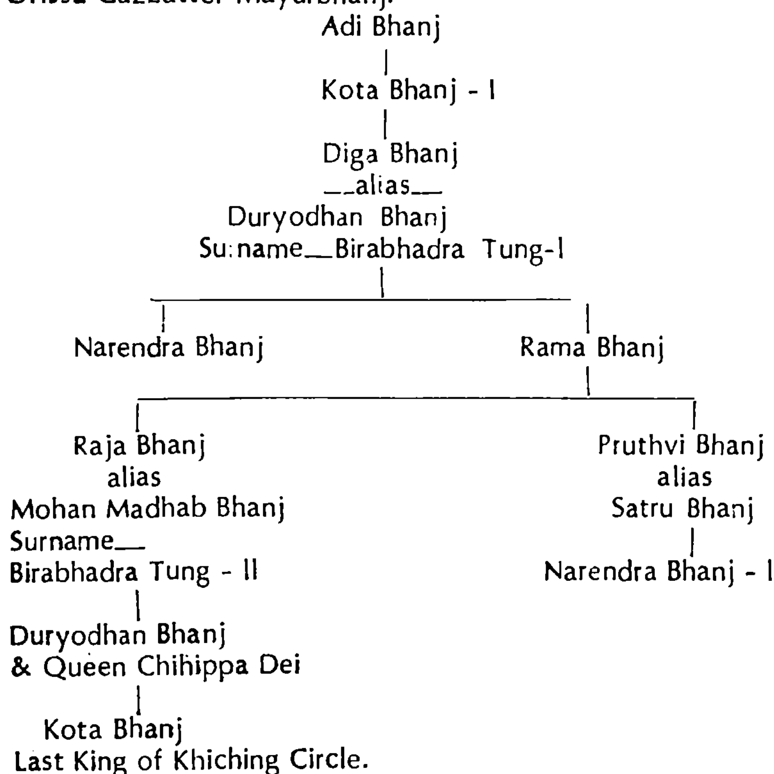
In 1869 the British rulers introduced the permanent Settlement system Ownership of land and inheritance of property became the go of the social system. British feudalism took its deep roots in our soil. The regions of Orissa administered by the Moghul emperors which later on went into the British rule and which was popularly Known as "Moghul bandh" became directly subject to this Act. Some feudal states those were subjugated to the British empire accepted the Act and launched the "System of Sardari" to Collect taxes and look into the home front of the administration. Thus administration from economic point of view became disciplined and deep rooted. The Royal dynasty, of course, held the charge of civil defence and currency stystem ot British Raj.

This type of Scientific approach in administration served as a fore runner of cultural renaissance which also took Place in Mayurbhanj. The evolution of Chhau as a classical pattern of dance style owe certain indebtness to the royal administration.

Bhanj Dynasty in Brief :

History is not written on a popular legend for legends are fantacies of idiots. Thus the Bhanj dynasty was originated from the eggs of a she-Peacock in baseless and untenable. This hearsay has got no scientific and rational sanction. One rock inscription was recovered from Asanpat

wherein it has been inscribed that in 4th century A. D. a king named shatru Bhanj was ruling over the region of Mayurbhanj and keonjhar. Similarly the rock inscrlption of Sltabinjha says that Dash Bhanj having acquired tilte of Raja-Rajeswar was ruling over Bhanj Bhoomi in 4th and 5th century A. D. However, history is silent about this dynasty from 6th to 9th century A. D. In 9th and 10th century the Bhanj Bhoomi had its political territory from Bonai to the port Tamralipta (the modern Tamluk in Midnapore district). Then Adi Bhanj (otherwise known as Gana Danda Birabhadra) was ruling over the land, according to source obtained from Baripada museum. The following is the synopsis of Bhanj dynasty up to kota Bhanj II as enumerated in Orissa Gazzatter-Mayurbhanj.



We may also note down certain important historical events of Mayurbhanj Since 14th century A. D.

1. Last part of 14th century the capital of Mayurbhanj was transferred from khiching Cuttack to Bahalda.
2. In 1400 A. D. Maharaja Harihar Bhanj set the capital town Hariharpur and transferred the capital to there.
3. 1510 AD__Sri Chaitanya visited Haripur and stayed there.
4. 1610 AD__Rasikananda Goswami Visited Mayurbhanj.
5. 1610 AD__Maharaja Baidyanath Bhanj ascended the throne.
6. 1730AD__Nilgiri attends statehood.
7. 1812 AD__Jadunath Bhanj's Corronation.
8. 1830-1834 AD__Kolha Tribe of Bamanghati rebelled. British look over that area.
9. 1863 AD__Death of Jadunath Bhanj.
10. 1863-1867 AD__Rule of Srinath Bhanj.
11. 1868 AD__Krushna chandra Bhanj (II) ascends the throne.
12. 1882 AD__Death of krushna chandra Bhanj II.
13. 1892 AD__Sri Ram Chandra Bhanj resumes power.
14. 1892-93__AD Formation of state-Council for better administration.
15. 1894-95 AD__Publication of "Utkal Prabha."
16. 1902 AD__Death of Maharani Laxmi Kumari.
17. 1903 AD__Sri Ram Chandra presides over the first session of "Utkal-Sammilani".
18. 1901 AD__Jubilee library was established.

19. 1905 AD—Baripada Municipality was set up. Construction of Balidiha and Haldia irrigation projects.
20. 1912—Sri Ram Chandra's death.
21. 1909-1912—Gopabandhu stays at Baripada.
22. 1921-1928—Purna Chandra Bhanj rules.
23. 1928-1948—Pratap Chandra Bhanj rules.

We may also quote certain events and their timings having connexion with Chhau.

1. In mid 19th century Maharaj Krushna Chandra Bhanj deputed two eminent "farikars" namely-Banamali Das and Upendra Biswal to Sareikala the neighbouring state of Mayurbhanj to study the masked dance there, (I)
2. During 1868-1882—formation of two groups named-Uttar Sahi and DaKshina Sahi for competitive growth of the dance.
3. 1882-1892— The patronage was slackened The dancers used to nurture it by their own attempt. The royal family used to show less interest in it.
4. 1892—Sri Ram Chandra Bhanj showed his special inclination towards Chhau and extended his helping hard.
5. 1912—Coinage of "War dance" at the active participation of Sri Ram Chandra Bhanj. This dance was staged at calcutta and was witnessed by George V.
6. 1926-27—Kavi Chandra Kali Charan's visit to Baripada
7. 1934—Coinage of card dance.
8. 1949—Chakraborty Raj GopalaAchary witnessed Chhau at Puri during his visit.
9. 1961—Registration of Mayurbhanj Chhau Nrutya Pratis than.

Assessment of Princely Patronage

Chhau has acquired qualitative change both in theme and style due to princely patronage. The rulers of Mayurbhanj have associated Chhau with "Chaitra parva", a state festival of Mayurbhanj. They have also started a convention of having launched the preparation for staging Chhau from Durga puja by worshipping Bhairab (2).

The Spring festival is observed in Mayurbhanj as Chaitra parva which in better known as "Ura Parva". Towards the concluding part of "Ura parva" or "Chadak parva" a Tues day or satur day is celebrated for raising "Ghat" (a symbolic earthen pitcher is to be brought in full of holy water from a stream in a procession to mark the auspicious conclusion of the chadak Brata). This is known as "yatra Ghata" at Baripada. In the mid night the "Ghata" is being taken in a colourful procession and on the way it is being received at Rajabati or Royal Palace. The awaiting King and his royal companions in order to kill the boredom of this waiting period they useally engage themselves by witnessing Chhau. Primarily this dance was staged purely in folk art form which was known as Amu Dalia and Jamun Dalia. The dancers decorated their bodies with branches of mango and jamun tree and they had to create humour in course of their dance. In the opinion of Chhau dance teacher Srihari Naik the dance was being treated then as ordinary dance of village folk and thus the king and his followers used this name for it. (3)

Later on the entertainment took the shape of satirical dance drama known as "Kaji-Paji dance." Some years later Kaji-Paji farce served as prelude to Chhau dance programme.

In our Village Pendals we see if the singer of "badi pata" delays to come to stage, the associate singer or the Patia starts the show with a lucid romantic but humourous story to while the time Kaji-Paji farce served this stop gap arrangement. More over this farce served as a timing to declare the detail programmes of chaitra Parva and Chhau dance for public information.

As because Chhau was chosen to be witnessed by the royal family on that occasion, the teachers turned Kaji-Paji farce to a brief introduction and coined Chhau dance in a semi-classical form in those days.

The royal family gradually was attracted to this dance and started taking part in it Their involvement brought the ruled and the rulers nearer to each other and enhanced the creative growth of this dance. This truth unfortunately has been over-looked by Prof. Ashutosh Bhattacharya who in his treatise on Purulia Chhau claims that-"The family of the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj was also a great patron of Chhau dance at one time, but its members did never adopt its practice among themselves." (4) But the fact is otherwise The princes used to take active part in Chhau during the rule of Maharaja Sri Ram chandra Bhanj Deo of which we feel the above researcher was ignorant. The younger brothers of Sri Ram Chandra namely Shyam Chandra Bhanj Deo (who later on was adopted as son of Nilgiri rulers and was coronated there) and Routray Saheb Dama Chandra

Bhanj Deo were given charge to manage Uttar Sahi & Dakshina Sahi troups respectively and these grew well under their leadership. (5)

In another context Prof. Bhattacharya has refuted claim of Mayurbhanj being the birth place of Chhau and imparted an injurious remark as—"Had this dance Originated in Mayurbhanj in Orissa, it would have spread over the districts of Orissa also. But the case is otherwise." (6) We are sure that Prof Bhattacharya has a little knowledge about the cultural heritage of Orissa especially the role of Chhau to enrich the heritage of Orissa. In fact, even today Chhau dance is being practised and performed in the districts of Keonjhar, Balasore, Bhadrak, Kalahandi, Dhenkanal and Bolangir. Recently the troups of Nilgiri and Kanika have started adding new dimensions to Chhau dance and ronovating the old stages in rural areas. Thus the statement made in this regard by Professor Bhattacharya loses its grounds. Having had the princely patroni ation Chhau had the scope to develop its contents. The Orissan cultural infusion further caused its enrichment. The chaupadis of Bhanja, the chhandas of "Rasakallol" and "Bidagdha Chintamani", the ballads of Nanda Kishore Bal and Radhanath were taken into account and Chhau's message and rhythms of Natki were reshaped with their tunes and spirit.

Kavi Chandra Kali Charan Pattanayak during his brief Stay at Baripada reshaped and recasted Chhau dance in the light of his understanding of Orissan culture which he mastered during his life-tenure. Kali Charan also had given a semi-classical touch to Chhau.

Maharaja Sri Ram Chandra was a patriot and patron of Oriya literature. He had taken keen interest in Chhau and lifted it to international arena by staging it before the visiting emperor. He had arranged cholarships for Chhau students also. By the active involvement of the royals, the dance improved its standard day by day. Certain new items were being added to the old schedule of names. In 1934, card dance, a socio-satirical dance came into being. This broke the supremacy of epics and legends over Chhau. The dance item "Kela Keluni" was also imported from the folktales of Northern Orissa. "Rasalata" was also coined taking into consideration of the popular stories from rural families. Virtually there was a cold war between competitive groups resulting in to innovation of new dance items each year. Thus each year on occasion of staging of Chhau during chaitra Prava new items were served. Each year, the Chaitra Parva was being concluded with humming discussion of the newly introduced dance items The atmosphere was too lively and it was so because of the direct involvement of members of royal family.

Maharaja Purna Chandra Bhanj Deo (1921-28) was minor when he became the king. Till he became major, an interim arrangement was made by the Durbar to grant a sum of Rs. 250/- each year to each troup and that helped Chhau to survive. The Chhau dancers thus went away with other jobs to earn their livings, leaving the art in turmoil. The drummers and the flute players went to attend the marriage processions displaying the rhythemic notes procured from Chhau. Maharaja Purna Chandra gave first priority to administration and neglected the art. The dancers also could not draw the attention of the king

to this decay. Maharaja Purna Chandra, however, helped an Oriya scholar and prolific writer Gopal Chandra Praharaj financially to compile the grandest ever Oriya language dictionary namely—"Purna Chandra Bhasa Kosa" But he could not patronise Chhau and the important reason may be his interest was marred by the conflict and leg pulling which was prevalent then within and among the Chhau troupes. But Chhau occupied an important position in Maharaja Pratap Chandra's list. As he was a great lover of art, he gave top priority in developing the dance.

Thus we can safely conclude, that those Raj-days were best for Chhau and at times worst for it. The development was not even but at times uneven.

References :

(1) Kabi Dr Atanu-Essay on Chhau-Naba Patra Rourkela, Page 101 July-Sept'83.

(2) Prof. Kuanr Durga Charan-Mayurbhanja Chhau Dance Page 14-15-Published by Orissa Sahitya Academy Bhubaneswar.

(3) Writer's conversation with Chhau Nrutya Guru Srihari Naik.

(4) Prof. Bhattacharya Ashutosh-Chhau Dance of Purulia-Page-29

(5) Mohanty Radhamohan-Mayurbhanja Chhau under Princely Patronage-Chhau Souvenir-Baripada-1978.

(6) Prof Bhattacharya Ashutosh-Chhau Dance of Purulia-Page-31



SHAIVISM AND CHHAU

The history of Shiva worship is too old in India. The Buddhist scripture said that a "Yaksha" who watched one of the entrances of the city "Raj griha" was named "Shiva". In those days, the word "Yaksha" was used as a synonym of "God". We also trace out in history that the God Vasudev, the supreme Lord of Vaishnabs was worshipped in 3rd century B. C. Prior to that Shiva had been worshipped in the name of Maheswar.

From 1st century A. D., we come across the tradition of Shiva worship from the sweta-sweta Upanishad. In the Upanishads Shiva is 'being described as a vagabond who lived in the mountains.

In Vedic "Shuktas" we do not find the name of Shiva but the Aryans had a severe hatred towards one God namely "Shishna Dev" who was an apex deity of Linga-worshippers. Even now-a-days, a hard core Vaishnab calls Shiva as the servant of Lord Vishnu. In "Balmiki Ramayan" besically Shiva's name was not there but later on it has been added by certain pundits at different stages of the "Balmiki Ramayan".

During the time of the invasion of Moghasthenes, Shaiba cult was there in India. Patanjali, the great yogic philosopher, who was living in 2nd century B. C. dipicted in his treatise that Shiva was wearing deer sKin and holding trishul His "Dharma" was popularly Known as "Pasupat Dharma" at that time. Saint LaKulish was its propounder. Paralally it was being advocated with Buddhism even outside India. Big Shiva temples were being constructed in farthest cambodia, Java and Sumatra. Many institutions came into being

centring around these temples, In Cambodia (formerly known as kombuj) these temples were called "Ashrams". The kombuj king "Yasa Verma" framed some code of conducts for the temple goers also.

Champa was the ancient name of Indo-China and the land was under the rule of the kombuj-rulers. Vadra Barma, the emperor of kombuj established many "Shivalayas" (temples of shiva) throughout the region The Shiva cult continued in the time of PraKash Barma (shakabda 536, Indra Barma (612 shaka) etc. Time came when Buddhism had a great merger with Shaivasism and they had a popular slogan as- "Budha and Shiva are equal and one entity". (1)

Later on the cult had been devided into several branches or sub-branches-such as-kapalikas, Kalamukha, Matta Mayur, Lakulishite etc. The devision look place probably during 6th or 7th century A. D. It severely effected the propagation in northern India where as the cult was intact up to the time of the Pallavas dynasty. The Great Shankaracharya took to the attire of Shaivites such as - the "Rudrak hya" beeds, the "Kamandalu", the trishul" and the "Vasma" etc. and posed as chief exponent of shaiva cult. The cult actually was further matured in the south with certain other communities Those to day also do exist as Pancha-Acharya-Vadin shaiva, and Lingayats.

In northern India Lakulish-cult was predominant in which there were many incarnation of Shiva-Lakulish, kaushiK, Garga and Maitreya. Later on this cult was devided into many branches. Among the famous exponents, to name a few, were-Kartikarashi, Valmikirasi, Tripurantak.

and of course all were from Gurjjar (i.e. the modern Gujrat)

The stone carvings tell that the cult was there spreading from the Himalayas up to Gujrat and from Gujrat upto Komboj. Four great schools, of learning-Haradwar, kanchi, Kashi, Ujjayini or Avanti have eternal relation to this cult.

During the rules of Sarangadev the places like Kedarnath, Rudra prayag Shri Parbat (according to Nagarjun the district of Guntur), Rameswaram & Benaras came under its fold. This cult was also believing in equality and fraternity and recognised the right to form association as basic conduct of conscious human-beings "Chinta Prasanti" is the mouth piece of this cult in which cooked rice, dal and mixture of co-coanut and banana were given as dinner to Lord Shiva which was the way to conclude His worship. At last Shiva was being offered a cone of betel. Later on Madhvacharya laid down some entertainment programmes for reti ing Shiva. The persons entertaining Shiva had the rights to sing, dance and make chorus. Before starting this collective show, they should also pray Shiva. The performers were believing that Shiva was the source of all martial arts The exponents of "Nyaya" philosophy claimed themselves as the "Shaivites". (2)

Shaivism came into Orissa during the rule of Ganga dynasty. Bhubaneswar became the central place of its operation. Throughout India Shiva is being worshipped both in Linga and deity form. In certain Shrines, there were faces on the top of the Lingam. In certain temples in south India we see it to have five faces-glorifying the name "Panchanan" meaning "five faced God".

In kali Math in the distiict of Garwal near kedarnath, the human shaped deity Hara and Gauri have been worshipped in stone carvings. "The daughter of the Mountains sits on His left thigh"-What has been described in scriptures, is seen in these stone carvings. I have also pointed out, elsewhere in this book that in Mayurbhanj Shiva and Parvati are being worshipped in image form. At Adipur on the river side of Baitarani, Shiva is being worshipped in image form. (3) There is also Parvati temple at Khiching which was being built at the time of king Shatru Bhanj who prayed the prime-deity Shiva at the outset of his each "Decree" now obtained in form of copper plates Later on the Shaivism was saturated in "Vairab cult" or the worship of Lord Vairab.

In the month of Chaitra, people in rural Mayurbhanj use to observe a community festival namely "Charakbrata" which is well-known as "Marriage of Shiva". One pond or tank is selected not far away from Shiva temple to hold daily routined bath and service which is known as "Sevajana". Thirteen, seventeen or ninteen "Bhaktas" (devotees) use to hold ritual there daily at the day end by worshipping a temporary built "Lingam" and go round in a procession in the village nearby, to reach the temple finally During their devotional march, they use to stop at places, preferably in village squares to sing collectively the glory of Shiva and dance by beating their sticks made of canes. Sometimes the drummers and pipe players accompany them to make the procession lively and crowd pulling. This routined "Sevajana" continues for 13 days and at last it culminates in the marriage of Shiva with Parbati (or with a demoness as dipicted in different folk songs).

In the very night of their marriage the son like devotees go to the temple in the evening to seek permission for preparation of His marriage. The head-man or "mukhia" of the village acts as the father of the "bride" and head-devotee as the guardian of the groom. The permission procession comes into the village from the temple with much pomp especially the dancers of the village act as the Nandi, Bhrungi, and Bull of Shiva and dance in the procession. Some of the dancers dance as ghosts, bhadua (eunoch) etc. to dipict themselves as the followers of the Lord "Pasupati."

In the midnight time, the appointed guardians assemble at the particular tank to perform the marriage. At the dawn, the marriage procession passes through the roads of the village with same vigour and same type of dance and carricatures.

In Baripada the Principal ghata (holy pitcher signifying the marriage of Shiva and Parvati) Passes secretly to its destination At the same time, the onlookers and juvilant participants who pose themselves as devotees of Shiva at the touch of emotion use to take a mock-ghata (or a duplicate holy pitcher) popularly known as "yatra ghata" in a procession with dance and music. This tradition has a great bearing over the formation of Chhau dance.

In course of time, the participants in the dance leading the procession tried to instill certain code of conducts in the folk dance and "tandab" (Cosmic dance) "Rudra dance," "Dhwajatal" etc. were formed out of that spirit.

The last day of Chaitra Parva is "Ura Parva" on which occasion the devotees use to fly in the open sky to please the newly married couple. Before that, in each day of the interim period from "Ghata Utha" to "Ura Parva" Bhaktas (devotees) show certain skills by walking on the fire, by hanging themselves upside downward on fire, known as "Ugratapa". These are nothing but the ceremonial programmes adopted by followers of Shaivism or the worshippers of "Bhairab".

Thus anyone can analyse Chhau dance items going-round the character Shiva and conclude its indebtness to the cult of Shaivism.

References :

1. Mahapandit Sankrityayan Rahul-History of Shaivism-Page 40, Selected essays.
2. I bid-Page 48.
3. Prof. Sarangi Deepak-Essay in Maharaja Sri Ram Chandra Bhanj Deo' 108th birth anniversary Souvenir, Baripada Page 48-49



CHHAU : AN ASTHETIC EVALUATION

There is a long drawn polemics whether social realism is better than "Rasa" or what would be their proportion in a performing art. Bharat Muni in his "Natya Shastram" has narrated the function of a dance as follows-

"Dharma yashasya ayusham
Hita budhi bibardhanam
Lokapadesh yananam
Natyam-etad bhabishyata"

Dance would increase the spiritualism, glory and longevity of an individual. It would enlighten his mind with conscience. It would also spread gospels of goodness in the society. These are the applicabilities of dance in the society according to Bharat Muni.

To create only "Rasa" or asthetic fervour is nothing but practising the age-old stereotype sayings "art for art sack". The asthetic values really represent the quality of Satyam (truth), Shivam (Beauty) and Sundaram (Goodness) in a performing art. We may analyse these elements here below-

There is continuous contradictions between thesis and anti-thesis to arrive at a conclusion which is known as synthesis in Hegelian dialectics. Thus the process of any development is oriented towards attaining truth. The conflict within the Nature which is reflected through

consciousness and growing consciousness is continous Their interaction leads to attainment of a relative Truth. (1) But any concept which is on move is not truth. It is a progress towards the perfection. Thus perfection may be termed as "Satyam" which is always subject to relativity.

Though satyam seems to be endless, free from all conditions but historically it is bound to be concrete and traceable. Thus satyam is the foundation stone of human creativity. Though relative, it is the stepping stone towards the perfection.

"Shivam" stands for welfare, genorosity and humanism. Rabindranath has created a link "Shivam" and "Sundaram" in his essay, "Saundaryabodh" (Sence of astheticity) as- "The image of astheticism is the image of goodness and the image of goodness is the paragon of all beauty".

"Sundaram" represents the traits like the get up, ideas, style, compare and compared, linguistic expression and innate subtleness. Sundaram represents beauty both inward and out ward. The fountain of Sundaram is Nature. Thus it stirs the inward nature of a man. It stimulates the thought process of a man and enriches the existing value system in it. It creates sensibility in him. In Oriental belief sundaram creates pure happiness in man. The happiness is altruistic in nature. It is the die-hard enemy of ugliness or sensory pleasure. It is anti-hedonistic It creates a cathersis in the domain of ugliness in man and gives an Orientation towards "goodness". Thus we see the function of real art is to educate, and lead man to an enlightened time.

The asthetic sensibilities are created by both form and contents of an art. The form of the dance item "Nataraj" is the dancer or the artist himself and the content is the sum and substance of his dance, his style of presentation and the sensibilities created through his entire presentation Both the form and content have leading role.

In "War dance" the form becomes vocal to project and dipict a warring situation-violent and aggressive in spirit. Thus here form leads to content. However, they are complementary to each other. To match the content, the form should have its qualitative perfection and sometimes vise-Versa. But every thing depends upon the skill of a trained dancer which is nothing but the result of long cultivation of his innate qualities in him.

We get pleasure to see a blooming flower. The inner development of the flower is projected through its outer menifestation that is through colourful petals etc. In other words, the qualitative development of the innate being of a flower leads to the qualitative development of its outward beauty. Thus the innate being agrees completely with the outer being This analysis is also true to the dance item "Yuga Parivartan". (the change of eras). The development of the situation leads to a culminating point in the dance when Shiva and Parbati arrive at the concluding part of dance.

The "avataras" come to the stage one after another as if the petals are being opened gradually and slowly At the point before arrival of the last characters i. e. Shiva & parbati, the audiance ponders-after this "Who" The last petal opens when Shiva and Parvati come dancing. In

"Kali yug" they are the real saviours and this thought consoles the eager audiance. The beauty of goodness created by other characters finds its fulfilment in it. it agrees with the gradual process of development it creates from the starting point of the dance. This item was created in 1912 taking into consideration of state of social development and mass psyche. The death of Maharaja Sri Ram chandra generated deep pessimism among the people. They thought it is sheer injustice on the part of MahaKala (Time) to snatch away the gems of the land. They thought good souls would not survive long in the era of "Kali" where tussels, falsehood, violence are the order of the day. The dancer dipicted a message of optimism in a form of reply to the ongoing thought process of those days. The dance projected the idea that even if "Kali" is governing the world, yet there is a source of consolation-a means to evade the onslaughts of "Kali". That is to become the devotee of the "Yuga vatar" Shiva and Parvati who are the real saviours in the era. Thus the dance served the purpose of social utility and became a commodity of solace to grief-stricken audiance. The element of social consciousness reigned supreme in the spirit of this dance item.

Thus to create of "Rasa" for the sack of "Rasa" is not sole aim of a dance. It must have a positive role in society to play. It must provide an Orientation towards betterment.

There are two categories of Rasa-i. e. Bira and Lasya in Chhau. The dance items like-Jambeb, War dance, Natraj, Sambhu Nisambhu come under the former and

Tamudia, Krushna, Bhadra Arjun, Dhwajatal, Banshi chori, Labani chori etc come under the later.

The act of body-movement has a prominent role in Chhau. "The tongue of the dancer is silent, but the whole body does the talking by signs as well as movements." (2) The act of bodymovement creates "Rasa" in the mind of audiance. It stimulates the emotion.

An important pre-Condition of astheticism is that the custome of the dancer has to agree with the theme. The green room paintings of Chhau is done having much similarity to that of dance "Kathakali". In "Kathakali" the dresses of a dancer is arranged in consultation of puranic prescriptions. The customes takes the audiance emotionally to that age and to that sorroundings. The colour used in the dresses of kathakali dancer are red, green, yellow and black which is also true for Chhau. In Kathakali the female character uses one deep lock of hair, having weight and colour. It is also equally applicable in case of Chhau.

In Kathakali the dancer dipicting the character of God uses a mask made of carved wood. On their neck they wear red necklaces containing lotus flower like links. It looks very wonderful. Some plain lines on the mask play important role to project ideas in dance. This sort of custome is known as "Chutti" in Kathakali. (3)

Initially Chhau was a masked dance in Mayurbhanj. Later on Chhau had to leave the mask under the guidance of the Durbar as they thought that enough could be done

if we paint the face of the dancers according to the spirit of the theme. The mask was rejected in view of acerfing Mayurbhanj Chhau as a separate entily, rather better than Sareikala and Purulia Chhau. But Chhau in masked form comes nearer to Kathakali. The dance becomes natural without mask in Mayurbhanj. To project fingers in artistic way and to move eye-brows and face in rhythm are two important elements of a classical dance. In Orissi dance, we see rhythmic movement of hands claim much prominence. But in Chhau no finger movement is introduced. In spite of this sort comings, Chhau creates "Rasa"

As we have narrated earlier, the Chhau has a positive role to Play in directing the society in its path of progress. But the role is seriously ignored as the present day teachers are not socially conscious. Chhau dance, in spite of appeals of the time, could not have taken patriotism, nationalism, humanism as the elements of its dance-items. Henece it becomes inactive to serve both the land and the people. It is pondering over the rusted themes of Purans and Ramayan, Mahavarat. Thus the teachers of Chhau should dive deep in the mainstream of the present-day society and coin the dance drama over these themes.

References

1) Pattanayak Guru Charan-Oriya Sahityara Matio Gati-Page 31, Nawayug Granthalay-Cuttack.

2) Kavi Guru Rabindranath-The Letter from Jawa-The viswa Bharati-Qly Vol.-1. 1928-April.

3) Adhikari Subhadra-Bharatiya Nrityakala-Page 45.

—O—

MAYURBHANJ : THE SEAT OF CHHAU

I came across some lines of a native poet Bhagaban Pradhan while I was talking to him in his village home at Singarpura, situated in sadar sub-division under Baisinga P. S. of the district Mayurbhanj. The lines are—

There are thirteen rooms of my Mother
Mayurbhanj is one of them
Where I have seen the dawn of my life
I shall also see dusk there.
(English rendering of the poem)

The poets' sense of belongingness, sense of love towards his native soil is very eloquent here. That very soil is the seat of a great folk dance-Chhau.

Mayurbhanj (in olden days was spelt as "Mourbhanj") is the land whose tender body is being purified by the rivers of Balangi, Jarali, Sarali, Subarnarekha, Jambhira whose deep never-ending forests are resounded and vibrated by the chirping and whistling of birds, whose winding forest paths are being decorated by dancing deers-whose geity is projected to the blue skies by lofty mountains and range of hills. The thetched cottages of village welcome the travellers for rest in the lap of poverty in abundance but with a heart within Bhanj bhoomi is the paragon of wild beauties of rivers,forests,hills,falls and what not. It is also the confluence of all cultures and civilisations those brought over from distant lands. The lines of the poem "Bharat Tirtha" which are applicable to India, are

also equally applicable to Mayurbhanj. The lines are "Here is a confluence of Aryans, Non-Aryans, Moghuls, Pathans and Huns." (1) Mayurbhanj has also accepted all faiths, traits, and cultures into its fold without hesitation and denial.

We may devide its inhabitants into two categories — "Hatua" (those came here for trade and commerce and later on settled) and "Bhuin phuta" (those who are the sons of the soil). The later is the premitive tribes of the land.

"Generally, there came four streams of civilization one after another to India and thier way of life were penetrated into that of sons of soil here. These streams were from — (1) Austro-Asiatic (2) Dravidians (3) Tibbet-chinese or Monglos (4) Aryans. The present day "Munda" community has its origin from the branch Austro-Asiatic stream" (2) The santhals who are the real occupants of Mayurbhanj were the elements of the Munda community and thus their original source was Austro. Asiatic civilisation which came to Indian soil in the days of yore. Later on Santhals identified themselves as a separate tribe and establisthed their supremacy over Mundas, the source of all tribes". (3) Research scholar Sudhir Kumar Bhowmik opines that the word "Santhal" has been derived from the Apavramsa "Samanta Ala" which has also been derived from its original word "Samanta Pala" of mundari language. There is no word as "Santhal" in Mundari vocabulary, though santhals are under Mundari community. The premitive Mundari community utilised a portion of its peoples for defence purpose. They were given proper martial training. They were known as "Samanta Pala"

means, "Soldiers". The word "Samanta Pala" in course of its decay turned into "Santhal" via Apavramsa "Samanta Ala". (4)

The other tribal inhabitntas of Mayurbhanj-Viz-Hoes, Kolha, Bhumija, Radha, Sabar, Juangas, Khadia, Bathudi, Lodhas have also their Austric Origin The word "Bhumija" is also derived from the word "Bhumi" meaning earth soil. They also feel proud thinking themselves as the "Sons of the soil" Though the accents are different but the vocabulary of Bhumija and Santhali language are largely similar.

The languages belong to the original Mundari family. The Mundari family consists of dialects Ikh-Santhali, Kurumali, Kolha Mahali, Kuruku, Kharia or Nahali Juane or Patua, Sabar or Gadaba etc. These dilects bear their influence over the spoken Oriya language of Mayurbhanj. (5)

Aryans invaded the land some times in pre-historic era as claimed by Dr. Shirish Parida in his treatise "Machha deshar Dan". Many tribals were subjugated to Aryan rulers and they had constituted sub-castes such as-Bauri, Kandara, Domo, Chamar, Pana, Hadi, Kha·ra, Mehentar, Kurunga, Dhobi etc. (6) These sub- castes are thus off-springs of the Munda, the original caste. It is relevant to mention here that "Chhau" is a dance originated in these sub-caste community. As these sub-castes were serving the Aryans, their dance was sub-servient to the Aryan class interest. In other words, it was meant to provide entertainment to the upper caste Hindus.

Mayurbhanj is also proud of having another community "Mahanta." They generally are wealthy and haves. They

have demand in post independence era the status of "Kurmi-Kshatriyas" and chosen to remain away from the S. C. and S. T. The daily life of Mahantas such as wearing the dresses, preparation of food, celebration of marriage, performance of last rites etc. are nearer to Aryan practices. This caste has its recent origin. However, their presence has added glory to the land

Mayurbhanj is the path finder to the secular creed. We see the Brahma temples, Shiva temples, and Vaisnabic Mathas in every corner of the land. Even the Ganapatya cult had been preached here.

The Jagannath cult.—

The Jagannath Temple constructed by Maharaja Baidyanath Bhanj at Baripada, temple at Kathua Amarda, Khunta, Udla, Ka anjia, and Keonjhar are some glaring examples.

The Shaiva cult

The Baruneswar at Baripada, the abode of Mahadev in Khiching, Shimileswar at Shimila the Shiva temple at Devsol, Chitrada, Manatri Kostha are some examples.

The Vaisnab cult.

The prominents are Gaurange Math and Radha Mohanjew Mandir at Baripada, Maths at Khunta, Kanpur, Udla and Rairangpur

The Brahma Temples.

Brahma Mandir at Baripada and Kaptipada.

The Shakta cult.

Kichakeswari temple at Baripada, Parvati temple at Khiching, Ambica goddess at Baripada.

The Maharajas did not accept anyone as state religion and symphathised everyone.

After independence, hand to mouth living became the order of the day. The creative talents in the field of Chhau could not be seen. Of late, the national Government could have realised the gravity of the situation and started aiding for improvement of the art.

References.

1) Tagore Rabindranath-Gitanjali.

2) Dr. Mahatab Hare Krushna-Editorial of jhankar-Sept, 83 issue-Page 573.

3) Ibid-Page 573.

4) Ibid-Page 573-74.

5) A collection of Essays on "Orissara Loka Sanskruti" Page-14-Orissa Cultural Forum Bhubaneswar-1978.

6) Ibid-Page 17.

ORIGIN OF THE WORD "CHHAU"

A lot of discussions have been held over the origin of word "Chhau" till today, but none has told anything contrary to the folk charactor of the dance. But there are uncompromising opinions on the origin and birth place of Chhau.

We can bring out the gist of the arguments put forth and scrutinise them as follows—

Some authors have opined that ' Chhau" has been derived from the word "Chhauni" meaning "Cantonment.' (1) Some others went a step forward by pointing out that "Chhau" is the modern version of the Khurda paika-dance "Pharikhanda" The "Paika dance" was being practised in the "akhras" (Place of getting together) of paiks in "Khurda" region in the district of Puri. Mayurbhanj had an intimate relation with the state of Khurda under British regime Chhau in its Pre-Durbari days was popularly krown as "Pharikhanda" dance and the dancers were popularly called "Pharikars". The spirit of a warrior was flowing like under current of this folk dance. Thus one may easlty relate it writh the spirit of cantonment and point out cantonment to be its place of birth. (2)

This argument has also been countered by some scholars. They question about its rituals If the dance comes form cantonment, they argue, how so many rituals, cults, and beliefs infiltrated into it. As we know, Chhau has

been related to Bhairab cult and practised in particular time in the year. Any dance having its origin from the cantorment, should not be subjected to such rituals and religious traditions. Rather place and timing would have been meaningless for a dance having born from the barracks Unfortunately the proponents of this argument have not advanced further to nullify these counter arguments

Some other scholars argue that the word "Chhau" hasb een derived from Sarskrit word "Chhaya" meaning "sh dow." Dr. Ashutosh Bhattacharya has challanged this by arguing that no where in it we see shadow being the basis of the dance. In his words—"There is nothing of "Shadow" as far as this particular form of dance is concerned." (3) Some scholars like Prof. Atanu Kabi argue that there is description of "Chhaya Nrutya" (dance of shadow) in an Oriya Kavya "Bidgadha Chintamani" written by famous Vaishnab poet, Abhimanyu Samant Singhar On going through vividly this epic, we find nothing like this sort. Rather we find various usage of the word "Chitra" (Picture) like "Chitrabhangi" (Pose having similarity with a photo or picture) "Chitrarpita" (pose dedicated itself to a photo) etc. The famous interpreter and critic of Bidgadha chintamani Prof. Artaballav Mohanty analysed the word "Chhayabhangi" (the word is used by the poet Abhimanyu in 3rd Chhanda or Chapter in the book) as—"different pictures having untraditional pose remained in the body of Srikrushna" (4) Thus shadow cannot be attributed to" Chhau" rather "Chitrabhangi" comes nearer.

In another context, Prof. Atanu Kabi has pointed out that the word "Chhau" is being filtrated through the generations from the word—"Chhauka." According to Prof. Kabi this

coloquial Oriya word means "Painted." But derivative science is not working here to arrive at the word "Painted" Purna Chandra Bhasakosh, the grandest dictionary of Oriya literature (1933) has explained the word "Chhauka" as "Some body who is expert to eat away food stealthly." (5) Thus "Chhauka" in the meaning of Bhasakosh may be an appropriate source-word. Hence Prof. Kabi Partly correct while he says that "Chhauka" is the source word of Chhau.

Let us examine the Oriya coloquial usage of the word "ChhauKa." It would be "Chheuki" in feminine gender. In one of his poems poet Udaynath Sarangi has written—

"Chheuki bilei machha chori Kari
Pithire pahar khai
Bhabai manare au kebehele
chori mu karibi nahin." (6)

Let us also go through one description of Prof. Kunja Bihari Dash and discover the word "Chhauka" in it. "There comes cerfain Tamil capitalist, one after another. They wear heavy turbans on their heads-applytilaks on their fore heads.-They are as blacK as coal. Their side of the mouth look heavy swollen dew to chewing betal. They are very "Chheuka" marchants. I see greed is burring in their eyes. (7) Thus "Chheuka" may be the source word from which "Chhau" might have been derived. There are certain poses in the dance justifying the above sense.

In page-5, in 12th volume the famous journal "Marg" it has been claimed that the word "Chhau" has come from the word "Chho." The Oriya word "Chho" means "to attack"

If we set the meaning given by Gopal Praharj for "Chhau" in "Purna Chandra Bhasakosh" at the side of the word "Chho." We can mark a stark similarity. Praharaj writes- Chhau means- "lying in wait, being prepared to pounce upon a prey" (8) Essayist Manmohan Mishra justifies it by saying that "Basically Chhau was a dance drama of hunters. Recently we see two trends in it-dancers using mask and dancers dancing writhout mask. "(9) Hence "Chho" may be the source word.

Another Originality in analysis has been shown by Prof. Ashutosh Bhattacharya. He says that a Mundari word "Chhak" may be the source word. In Mundari language "Chhak" means "Ghost." They also call "ghost globin,s dance" as "Chhak Shusan."Chhau was the principal dance of ShivadevoteesShiva is the ring-leader of the ghosts and of creamtion ground To quote Prof Bhattacharya directly "Chhau dance was originally the dance of ghosts and globins or the followers of Shiva before the Shrine of Shiva in course of His annual worship." (10)

If we go down the lane of history of dances, we come across the trend of "Loka brutta" in the premitive days of culture. According to Prof. Hemanta Kumar Das, from premitive days, as we see, two trends were there so fas as acting and drama is concerned They are-"Vidagdha Brutta" and "LoKa Brutta." Bharat Muni was chief director of Vidgdha Brutta in his own stage. Side by side there was wide acceptance and adoption of Loka Brutta out side the perview of Bharat's stage. The Loka Brutta has its prominence in the open air stages of the remote villages." (11) The "farce" staged in the open air pandels in known

as "Chhai." The dictionary meaning of "Chhai" is "Chhatak." These words are akin to English word "farce" an action done in humour and jest. "Kaji-Paji" farce the early edition of chhau falls in this category of "Chhai" or "Chhatak." The card dance is the brain child of this spirit of humour, jest and satire.

In Oriya language "Chhai and Chhatak" is used in the sense of "Chhata" meaning a glance having a satirical sense. In"Kishore Chandranan Champu" Kavi Surya Baladev Rath has used the word "Chhata" as—

"Chhata Kaha Katakshyara
Chhuri hela ki bakshyara" (12)

It means—the satirical glance pierced like a knife on her breasts."

Hence "Chhata" may be a word nearer to source of "Chhau." The most probable source word, according to Guru Srihari Nayak is "Chhai" as narrated above. (13)

Thus our discussions may be summarised as follows—

1) That Chhau is a folk dance. It is very nearer to people's theatre or dance drama.

2) It comes under the famous "Udra Magadhi" style of dance. The ancient region of Anga, Banga & Kalinga were its place of Origin.

3) It has come from the process of the "Chhau Akhra" Even today we hear words like-"Santhali Akhra." "Bathudi Akhra" etc. meaning collective dance drama of Santhals and Bathudis. Chhau was basically a folk dance drama. The solo dances have their later origin in it.

4) It has been created by certain aborigins like Dom, Kurunga etc. for the purpose of self-entertainment. Later on it has served Durbar and it has been utilised for its class interest.

5) It has been evolved, but not made over-night. One can not furnish any date and timings of its origin(14)

6) If we observe the green room of Chhau we see that the painter paints the face and body of the dancer with certain commodition obtained from rural villages. They use raw chalk, dried wax of yellow-ants etc. for this purpose. It justifies of its rural origin

References.

(1) Prof. Kuanr Durga Charan - Mayurbhanj Chhau dance- Page-7.

(2) Pattanayak D. N. - Some observations on the origin of Chhau dance Chhau Souvnir - 1978 - Baripada- Page-14 &15.

(3) Dr. Bhattacharya Ashutosh - Chhau dance of Purulia Page - 27.

(4) Bidgadha Chintamani-Published by Prachi Granthamala- Utkal University 1965 Edition

(5) Praharaj Gopal chandra-(1872-1945) Purna Chandra Bhasakosh-16th volume-Page 2749-1933.

(6) Sarangi Udaynath - Machha chasa, Nandan Kanan - 1st year 1st vol. 1981 - Page 9.

(7) Prof. Dash Kunja Bihari-Lanka yatri-(Oriya) Page 71 (English rendering done by the essayist).

(8) Praharaj Gopal Chandra-Purna Chandra Bhasakosh-16th vol. Page 2749-1933.

(9) Mishra Manmohan - Orissar Loka Sanskruti - Page 56, Aviyatri-Aug.-Octo.-1982.

(10) Prof. Bhattacharya Ashutosh-Chhau dance of Purulia-Page-28.

(11) Prof. Dr. Das Hemanta Kumar-Orissar yatra Parampara o Ajir Natya Sahitya, Samabesh-Jan-March 83

(12) Rath Baladev - Kabisurya Granthabali - 1977 Edn., Page-112

(13) Conversation with Guru Srihari Naik.

(14) Conversation with Guru Srihari Naik.



KAJI AND PAJI FARCE IN MAYURBHANJ CHHAU

During the Raj days, Mayurbhanj Chhau possessed a lively introductory part which was popularly known as Kaji-Paji farce. An actor being dressed as a Kaji or Judge of Moghul court comes dancing to the stage being followed by his disciple-Paji who behaves like an idiot. They use to create humour through their dialogues and postures. Every now and then the Paji uses to raise questions on different issues and the all-knowing Kaji would answer them suitably on a satirical vein. The cultural affairs department of Royal administration had introduced this farce as an audiance puller to Chhau dance which was to follow this programme. Sometimes, this farce was being used to announce the schedules of forth-coming Chhau dance.

Kaji & Paji farce is also being enacted as a dance-drama. In Sanskrit dramas, as we see, the "Sutradhar" uses to visit the stage at the outset. He invites his wife or beloved and talks to her on different problems of his household. He paints the reality of life through this and takes the audiance to a higher scene by staging the drama. At the end of the show, he appears again to say good bye to the audiance.

In the folk open opera, "Kela Keluni" a village priest comes to co-ordinate the show. "Kela" (the male bird-catcher) loses his wife "Keluni" in the deep forest during his "Shikar." When they reunite, one cannot recognise the other. Thus they take the help of a village priest to

identify themselves as the same couple, The "Kela" asks Certain typical questions and the priest relays them to Keluni one by one and persues her to answer. The Keluni also puts certain questions. The questions are generally based on Puranic episodes and day to day events. At length, the village priest urges them not to quarrel and requests them to be united and live happily. The priest carries his role in a tinge of humours. The spirit of this folk dance-drama of North Orissa has certainly influenced the Kaji and Paji farce. The Paji also asks questions on Puranic theme and tests the knowledge of the Kaji.

The farce has also been indebted to Baishnab Pani's dance drama so far as the nature af dialogues are concerned. The Kaji and paji utter lucid prosaic phrases, sentences and sometimes sing malodious songs to establish their points. The Baishnab Pani's folk opera begins with the arrival of a layman, a priest or a Katual or the watchman of royal court. He tells of his plight of his daily life like shortage of food at his home, or posity of leave. His wife joins him either to dislodge his opinion or to support him. Both of their conversation take the shape of a quarrel. The quarrel leads to a generalised conclusion which supplies motion to leap into a dance drama. The essence of their dialogues is jest, humour and satire. The proportion of satire is less because the common audiance does not follow it correctly, This also serves as a motivating factor to see the main episode.

The Kaji and Paji exchange of view served also purpose of propagating welfare measures of the Royal Government of Mayurbhanj. A decade before its merger with the main land of Indian union, Mayurbhanj was having an elected Parliament and the king was functioning

like a titular head. It was a nominal form of Government. The Kaji used to sing the glory of the system and justify its relevance. The year (i e. 1905 AD) in which Balidiha irrgation Project, the first ever multi purpose dam Project in Orissa was opened to fanction, the Paji had asked certain questions on it. The Kaji had also explained about its necessity for the development of the state from the point of view of producing more food grain. In 1905, Baripada Municipality also came into being. This self Government system also caught the glimpse of the Paji who posed certain questions on it. The establishment of Power House, the inauguration of air-strip at Rajabasa were also drawn into the exchanges Thus the Kaji and Paji farce served as an effective means to create public awareness on the welfare measure of the Royal Government.

Recently this farce was discouraged by terming it as rustic. It was given up for the sake of inducting certain novel approach to Chhau dance. The Chhau dancers paid more importance to 'Judan' or Ranga Vadya than to this farce. The shortage of effective actors to enact the role of Kaji and Paji also posed a problem and became one of the reasons of its abolition. Till today aged viewers long for seeing the farce which really had won their hearts during the Raj days.

—o—

BHAIRAB AND BHAIRABEE IN CHHAU.

The deities Bhairab and Bhairabee are adyadebatas" (the gods worshipped at the beginning of practice) of Chhau. There are Bhairab temples in each village having relation with Chhau dance. The dancers use to start their practice each year generally from the Dussehra. The deities are being worshipped by the practioners on that day. The priest who uses to worship the deities, tie a cord named "Nada" on the right hand of the dancer and the dancer vows to observe restraint in sexual intercourse and keep practising the dance every day till the Chaitra Parva is over. Dussehra is observed in Orissa for worshipping the "Shakti" Goddess Durga. On Chaitra Parva Siva weds Shakti, This dance links two auspicious days and hence important.

From the days of yore, Mayurbhanj was the confluence of all religions and cults. The rulers of Bhanj Dynasty has never accepted any of them as their state-religion. They rather have proved themselves secular. But Bhairab and Bhairabee cult reigned supreme in the land.

Generally by the term "Bhairab" we mean something which creates fear in one's mind. We come across the use of word "Bhairab" in the poems of Radhanath Ray, the founding father of modern era in Oriya literature.

Certain examples would suffice.—

"Bhairaba Arabe Reba dei lampha
Janamae jana manase prakampa." (1)

In the kavya "Mahayatra"—

"Jadu bansha dhwamsha shuni kuru kulamani
Judhisthira kiritinku kahile sambodhi
He bira, Dustar kuru samar-sagare
(Teemi teemingala rupe bhramile bhairabe
Jahin maharathipati, Visma Drona adi)
Je mahapurusa nija krupa taranire
Pari kale Pandabanku karnadhara rupe ..(2)

In his prayer "Shri kalika Stuti" written in Sanskrit, Radhanath has in his inner mind the Goddess Kali who takes Bhairabee form and whose worship was prevalent in coastal Orissa.

"Bhasmi kuru me sarba brujeenamayi
Devi bipinam pahi
Bhairaba rupinee Bhairaba Mohini
Sarba vayam mam trahi" (3)

Bhairab is the God-incarnation of Shiva, the destructor of universe. There are typical names of Shiva in fitting with his action in given situations. As he has killed the demon Tripura thus he bears a famous name "Tripurari." that means—"enemy of demon Tripura." Thus Shiva has obtained the name "Bhairaba" in certain particular context.

In this connexion, we may refer to the lines of "Mahabharat," written by poet Sarala Das (1436-1466).

In a prayer to Bhairaba the "Shudra muni" Sarala Das has pointed out—

"Girijara ballava maha Bhairaba murati
Shudramuni Sarala Dasara atai prakruti" (4)

Again...

"Kala agni Mahalinga jayatu kashipati
Utapati palaya to tahun nahın ana
Andhaka Vidaran jayatu Trilochana
Baila bahane bhramina anubratena matı Bhola
Bhairaba rupa dhari patilu Mahakhala" (5)

Sarala Das here has pointed to consmic dancing pose of Nataraja or Shiva. The cosmic dancer possesses a hollow of fire around him Shiva while gets annoyed and purturbed rescrts to dancing which gradually takes shape of a cosmic dance.

Shiva took his Bhairabic form in a special situation as enumerated by poet Sarala Das in his Oriya Mahabharat. The story goes like this—

"In Sabha parva (i. e. the canto in which parliamentary affairs and proceedings of Kaurabas were discussed) the Pandabas had hunted a special animal Gandar. This success enraged a warrior named Nagarjuna who also had earned blessings of Lord Shiva by dint of his meditation. He envied the Pandabas. Shrikrushna, the friend, philosopher and guide of the pandabas criticised the Lord Shiva as his devotee Nagarjuna could not distinguish evil and good. In the words of Srikrushna the bitter criticism went as follows—

"Tu je tapa kalu patala Ganga tire,
Kusha lochiye lochai delu nadira kule
Bedamata Gaitiri asuna thila chari
Na jani goo mata se Khaila kusha bidi

Raga Sambhari nuari tu dhainlu kopanale
Goo mata Kapilaku mailu Hara Shule
Gaira sharire shula to ha a je padi
Se Goomatara munda padilaka Chhidi
Anakai katha tu je na jani kalu Dhurjati
Bhairaba rupare khapare tohar
Goomata munda goti."

Thus worshipping Bhairaba means to worship Shiva. Bhairaba is nothing but an emotional state of Shiva after killing kapila, a devine cow in fury as because she consumed his bundle of kusha-grass which Lord Shiva kept on the bank of the river while taking his bath. But popularly Shiva is being worshipped in linga form But how do the Chhau-devotees venture to worship him in an idol form going upstream in the prevailing popular mode of worship.

Shaivas of Orissa use to worship Shiva in pennis form. The Shaktas generally worship the goddess Shakti in a round shaped vagina form. In Orissa these two cults had their merger during 12th century. Thus an agreement in case of their structure of deities was reached wherein a round shaped vagina would surround a perpendicular pennis. There after the followers of both the cults used to worship it in a common-place.

But the Mayurbhanj Shaivites continued to worship Shiva in human being structure. We can still see Ekadasa Rudra is being worshipped at Adipur, a place on the bank of river Baitarani (7). The Shakti devi is also being worshipped in human being structure as Chamunda in Khiching and as Kichakeswari in Baripada. The life size deity of Parbati is being seen on the walls of the

Khiching Temple which was untraditional during 11th and 12th century. Thus it is evident from these facts that Bhairaba was being worshipped in nooks and corner of Mayurbhanj in idol form by the commoners.

In Oriya Bhagabat poet Jagannath Das has narrated the objectives of worshipping different deities. He who wants to acquire wealth, worships the Lord Kuvera whereas the devotees aiming to acquire sieman and their by gaining strength and vigour generally worship the Lord Shiva. The lines of Srimad Bhagabata goes like this—

"Dhanarthi puje Dhana Swami
Rudranku puje birya-karni" (8)

Hence the objective of worshipping Bhairaba on the part of Chhau dancers was to acquire vigour and strength in their body which is very much essential to act as a trainee in the Chhau dance course.

The Shaiva cult in Mayurbhanj was centred around its focal point-"Bhairabapur"—a place near Anla in the sadar sub-division Baripada. Its perverted name is "Bhairangee" Its operational area was Manatri-Khiching and Devsol-three important "Shaiva pithas" of the land situating on the three corner point of a golden triangle. Their Co-ordination was being done from Bhairangee. In 1919 a copper plate containing administrative directions of king of Utkal, Narasingha Dev-II was discovered from the house of a Santhal in the village Asanakhali near the above mentioned village Bhairangee. Narasingha Dev II spent sometimes at Bhairabpur while invading the northern provinces From Bhairabpur he had visited the famous Brahmin village Bangsoda (the modern Basta in sadar sub-division of Balasore district) and donated 341 bati (6820 acres of land) to brahmins and temples. He did it in memory of his

departed son Gangaraj Dev expecting the salvation of his restless soul. The sanskrit content of the declaration is as—

Swakumarasya Gangaraja Devasya swarga praptaye devevyoh brahmanevyoh Shashni Krutwa eka chatwaringsha adhika bhoomibatika shatatraya pradanaya Bangshoda choura bishaya madhya barti Kruttaranya bhoobhagam."(9)

Thus it is evident that Mayurbhanj was a friendly state of Abhinab Bidanasi Cuttack and Bhairangee as a famous Shaivite learning centre was focal point attracting devotees and Scholars. This also shows the enriched Shaivite culture and heritage of the area. Since these glorious days, Bhairab and Bhairabi have been considered the prime deities of Chhau dance.

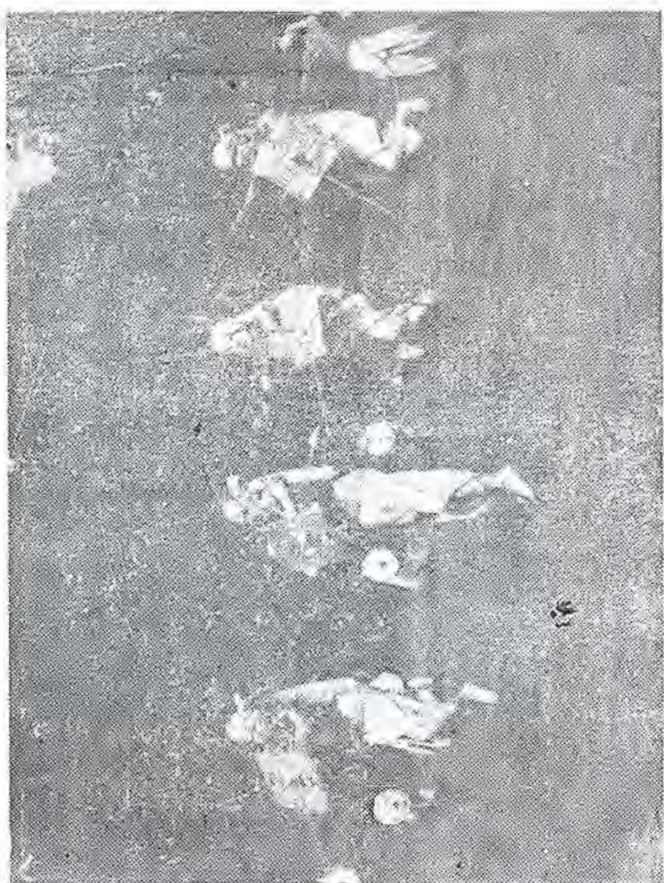
References

1) Roy Radhanath-Chilika-Page 138.
2) Roy Radhanath-Mahayatra-Page 155.
3) Roy Radhanath-Shri Kalika Stati-Granthabali-Page 294-1975 Edn.
4) Das Sarala-Mahabharat-First Vol.-cultural Deptt., Orissa Govt. P. 163.
5) I bid-Page 175
6) I bid-Sabha Parva-Page-598-599.
7) Page 47-48 Souvinir brought out by Maharaja Ramchandra Library-Baripada-on Maharaja's 108th birth anniversary-1978.
8) Das Jaganath-Oriya Srimad Bhagabat 2nd Vol. 3rd Chapter
9) Dr. Mahatab Harekrushua History of Orissa 1st Part-Page 226

—O—









It is a stimulating and Comprehensive publication on an performing art-namely, Mayurbhanj Chhau. The topic dealt with include Chhau dance as a folk-art, history of its evolution, patronage it received from erstwhile princely states of Orissa, its relation with other folk dances and above all a critical and unbiased asthetic evaluation. While each aspect of Mayurbhanj Chhau has been explained in simple language, its Contents has been enriched by critical remarks and appraisals. In short this book is an amalgam of conceptual analysis, theoretical formulation, empirical findings and objective evaluation of this famous dance.

Banchhanidhi Das (b. 1950) is a brilliant essayist in Oriya literature. He is working as an officer in L.I.C. of India at Bhubaneswar City Branch. He writes for Oriya dailies like Prajatantra, Pragativadi, Sambad, Rastradoot, Ajikali & Nutan Barta and for many literary journals of Orissa like Pratibeshi, Alakananda, Chandrabhaga, Jhankar, Katha. He is also author of some books in Oriya-Jhadar Banshi (Poem 1977) Nidrit Bharat Jage (Poems-1984) Punascha Utkal Bhraman (Satire-1986) and Bajra Kanthe (Poems 1988) He edits a literary monthly —Alakananda which acts as a trend setter in literary criticisrm in Oriya literature.

——